

Claims

We claim:

- 5 1. A method comprising the steps of:
 communicating with a radio frequency identification ("RFID") device,
 wherein the RFID device is associated with an item;
 selecting an incentive for the item; and
 programming the incentive into the RFID device at one of the following
10 events: point-of-decision to purchase the item, point-of-purchase of the item, or
 point-of-distribution of the item.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the RFID device has an initial incentive
 stored therein prior to the step of communicating, and wherein the incentive that is
15 selected and programmed into the RFID device is different than the initial
 incentive stored on the RFID device.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of, prior to the step of
 selecting, programming an initial incentive into the RFID device, and wherein the
20 incentive is different from the initial incentive.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of selecting an incentive for the
 item is based on a set of parameters.
- 25 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the set of parameters is specific to a
 consumer of the item.
6. The method of claim 4 wherein the set of parameters is specific to a
 consumer of the item and selected from a group consisting of the following: a

profile of the consumer, a purchase history of the consumer, product loyalty of the consumer, and a shopping list provided by the consumer.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the RFID device is attached to a coupon.

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8. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of coupling the RFID device to a reader in at least one of the following manners: capacitively coupling, inductively coupling, electrostatically coupling, and electromagnetically coupling.

10 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the RFID device is attached to a substrate comprising a plurality of RFID devices.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the substrate is selected from a group consisting of: paper, plastic, and cardboard.

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11. The method of claim 1 wherein the RFID device is associated with an item in one of the following ways: attached to the item, integral to packaging of the item, inside packaging of the item, and a coupon for the item.

20 12. The method of claim 1 wherein the RFID device is packaged within the item prior to the step of programming.

13. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of reprogramming the RFID device to a default incentive after an expiration period has expired for the
25 incentive.

14. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of coupling with the RFID device in a monopole configuration.

15. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of coupling with the RFID device in a dipole configuration.

5 16. The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying the incentive on a user device.

10 17. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of receiving an indication that a decision to purchase the item has been made prior to the step of programming.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein the RFID device is programmed with a first set of data from a first source and a second set of data from a second source.

15 19. The method of claim 1 wherein the RFID device is programmed with a first set of data at a first time and a second set of data at a second time, the first time being different from the second time.

20. The method of claim 1 wherein the RFID device is reprogrammable.

20 21. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of selecting occurs by touching the RFID device.

25 22. The method of claim 1 wherein the incentive is selected from a group consisting of: an actual price of the item, and a reduced price for the item.

23. A method comprising the steps of:
communicating with a radio frequency identification ("RFID") device,
wherein the RFID device is associated with an item;
selecting an incentive for the item;
5 displaying the incentive on a user device;
downloading the incentive into the user device at point-of-decision to
purchase the item; and
applying the incentive to the item at point-of-purchase of the item.

10 24. The method of claim 23 further comprising the step of receiving an
indication that a decision to purchase the item has been made prior to the steps of
downloading and applying.

25. A method comprising the steps of:
15 communicating with a plurality of radio frequency identification ("RFID")
devices in a given area;
identifying a first set of RFID devices that are in the given area at a first
time;
identifying a second set of RFID devices that are in the given area at a
20 second time, wherein the second time is different than the first time;
identifying a third set of RFID devices that are in the given area at a third
time, wherein the third time is different than the second time; and
determining a fourth set of RFID devices that present in the third set but
not in the second set.

25 26. The method of claim 25 wherein the fourth set further comprises RFID
device that were present in the first set but not the third set.